

# **News from the mews**

Save the Spike Surplus Scheme from eviction. Support its activities and join in the campaign. Merlyn Peter reports on the recent permaculture course run there.

The permaculture course at Spike was a resounding success. Despite a late start we battled through the elements, and week by week various structures and functions were put in place. Not least were the workshops that happened alongside the course including the willow weaving and the bee keeping. We are not quite there yet, and so anybody who wants to continue volunteering at the Spike is quite welcome with every Sunday an opportunity to do some basic gardening. The exciting new structures include a fire pit area with seating, the woven willow archway, the cob oven, and a drip irrigation system. Some

things need tweaking and with time they will be refined. Various plantings have gone in, and the new raised beds now successfully house various vegetables. The assorted soil structure is an example of the resourcefulness of the community here to salvage what is free. For example, the steps and the seating around the fire pit area were made from reclaimed sleepers and log saucers from a recently cutdown tree. The cob oven, which is yet to be finished, was constructed from the premixed landfill soil straight out of the mound we were working on. Some other techniques we used included

recycled coffee hessian sacking to stabilize the banks from soil erosion. And with a handful of plants from Merlyn's own back garden the project can now boast a variety of exotics and natives. Even the grafted apples on the hawthorn shrubs have taken. The icing on the cake for me is to sculpture the cob oven into a monkey, and then plant a Monkey Puzzle right next to it . I would like to organize further workshops including green woodworking, outdoor cooking, fruit and vegetable production, and a full permaculture design course. For more information on course workdays, events and parties

# Coed Hills is getting itself ready for the big food crisis about to hit Britain. The community now grows its own.

This beautiful environmental arts center is going through a transition. Now that the art is taking a back seat in its place is a drive to grow as much food as is necessary. Over the past few months a group of dedicated volunteers and Woofers have re-

generated the greenhouse and polytunnel, the various composting systems, and the forest garden. The latest development is a market garden. Ramblers can generally walk through the croft and observe the exciting progression going on. With new

enterprises on the horizon including animal and bee keeping, SLP hopes to keep ahead of the pack by running a full Pc design course in conjunction with Michele Fitsimmons. This 2-week residential is an opportunity to relax and learn about living in nature. See back page for book-

# 2008

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# Membership offers (see back page)

- ♦ Free DVD
- Regular email bulletins on courses and events around the UK
- A collectable design portfolio
- ♦ 10% discount on courses run by SLP
- Discounted books and library resources
- Volunteer and paid opportunities at festivals and other events
- Workdays and private tuition
- Free newsletter

# Chair's Chat

# Is permaculture a quiet revolution?

I thought this to be a great opportunity to put the record straight. As (Hon) Chair for SLP I must ensure that we embrace the three guiding ethics of permaculture. They are Earth Care, People Care and Fair Shares. As I embark on another year of passionate teaching and inspirational energy, stimulating my fellow colleagues on the do's and don'ts of sustainable practice, it comes off the back of what might otherwise have been a traumatic year. I had become the brunt of many accusations that left my community allotment project flagging. Instead of fighting off the assault I remained passive, because I wanted to show the undue damage individuals were causing to their environment and community. In the next 10 years we may see a magnified version of this psychological disturbance, a mute point so far in the whole environmental argument. When oil prices, as predicted, really rocket, and people's affluence really takes a tumble who does one run to? The police? A psychiatrist? Or a Lawyer? Who is going to look after the children when households suffer from overwork and stress in order to continue their prodigious lifestyles? But the real issue that remains un-addressed is this: What about the great social upheaval that will happen when the psychological basis of people's mentalities begin to break down due to economic unrest and institutional degradation? I have seen the signs already, and the only cure for it are preventative measures. My personal conflicts with the allotment committee has resulted in me taking them to court, but I waited a good year before I did so. That's because I wanted nature to produce the answer, and to show me when the moment was right. All along I tried to be amicable. In not taking a negative view of the whole procedure I am using the opportunity to educate and stimulate new potential growth. My proposal to the council was to allow SLP to directly subrent a part of the allotments where I could continue to run my community events. Only time will tell but in the meanwhile I hope I have blown the dusty cobwebs off the conservative washing line that never seems to change its clothing fast enough. If every allotment does not have a community project by 2010 then you can guarantee that the environmental movement has gone wayward. One should emphasis technology and awareness of critical issues, but the fact that degradation starts in the family means that this is the first place where healing must take place. Governments and institutions obviously have a role to play but your true healer is not the business guru or the politician (bless their cotton socks), but your children. I have said this before and I will say it again. Every adult in this world must become a parent. You know when you are on the right track, because a child will come to you asking.

# Food Up Front The Urban Food Growing Network

Well, what can one say? If everybody grew their own food most of the problems in the world would vanish. Food Up Front says:

- Grow your own tasty, healthy organic salad, herbs and vegetables in whatever space you have and reduce food miles.
- \* Receive a food growing 'starter kit', consisting of everything you need to get started [a container, natural peat-free compost, organic seeds and a food-growing guidel.
- Learn the basics on registering.
- \* Receive ongoing support and growing advice from the Food Up Front team.
- \* Meet other people in your area through a fast growing network of food growers.

If anybody would like to enroll and become either a member or a street rep (free membership) then do not hesitate to contact us at:

http://www.foodupfront.org t 07726 560703 e info@foodupfront.org

### Dates for your diary

- 27th July Chelsea Physic Garden
- 9th August Volunteer gardenining day
- 30th August Balham & Tooting carnival
- 31st August Picnic & vegetable competition (3 categories: largest, most beautiful & funniest vegetables)



To place an advert or an article please call Merlyn 0845 458 1 734

0845 458 1 734 eight.merlyn@ virgin.net



# Product launch

Money raised in the sale of these products will go towards the Urban Green Fair 31st August 2008 in Brockwell Park, Brixton and also to the Lambeth Green Party GLA election campaign on 1st May 2008.

The items are:

# 1. The OWL Wireless Home Energy Monitor

http://www.2saveenergy.com/products.htm

A wireless electricity monitor displaying the cost of electricity use in the home on a portable, easy to read LED display.

\* Displays cost of electricity, energy consumption and greenhousegas emis-

sions

- \* Separate displays for temperature and humidity
- \* No additional wiring necessary
- \* RRP £49.95. <u>Urban Green Fair</u> supporter price only **£40.**

#### 2. Standby Buster

http://www.standbybuster.com/ Standby Buster is a remote controlled electrical socket that lets you switch appliances off completely so that they use no electricity. Each socket can take a 4 way adaptor.

- \* Fed up with wasting money and energy by leaving things on standby?
- \* Can't be bothered to turn everything off at an inaccessible plug every night?

# The UGF: Can Brixton pull it off again?

### The Urban Green Fair 2008.....

Following from last year's successful event, the Urban Green Fair team is already planning this year's festival. Last year saw around 10,000 folks enjoy the sunshine and sights in Brockwell Park, Brixton, with families especially welcome. The festival boasted several zones - including Permaculture, Speakers Forum, Peak Oil, Sustainable Transport, Health, Healing, and Food & Farming. It also featured a fantastic kids area. "Its all about learning whilst having fun", said Carol Laws - the kids area co-ordinator.

Combining market stalls, displays from 'green' businesses, and roaming pedal-powered entertainment, the UGF strives to be relevant and independent. This year the fair, managed by a Community Interest Company, is undertaking some serious fundraising, in the hope of providing even more great content. Its also

designing a new website www.urbangreenfair.org

and running in a few weeks.

Look out for the Permaculture Zone, organised by South London Permaculture. This year it hopes to turing special guests, with a string of workshops around the crucial elements of current environling as it does at the end of August the apple press should reflect what is in season at the time.

"We achieved it on a shoestring budget last year, Ken and Api and the odd punter passing by made the event happen. Let's hope for a bigger house façade this year, showing just where it is happening, on our front doorsteps.'

our very selves be even bigger feaand demonstrations mental issues. Faland the culinary area

which should be up

As last year, the festival will be alcohol free, and feature music only as incidental to the main thrust of the event – practical changes everyone can make, with environmental products that really make a difference no 'green-wash' here! The event is entirely powered by renewable energy - right down to the on-site caterers.

Scheduled for 31st August 2008, we hope to see you there! For further information please check the UGF website in a few weeks. Stalls bookings are currently being taken – pls. call 0208 671 5936.

- \* Standby Buster Value Pack. Three electrical sockets and one remote controller.
- \* RRP £29.99. Urban Green Fair supporter price £24.
- \* Standby Buster Starter Pack. One electrical socket and one remote controller
- \* RRP £14.99. <u>Urban Green Fair</u> supporter price £12.

So if you'd like these products contact Shane Collins on t 0208 671 5936 e shane@gn.apc.org

- \* Green Party candidate for Lambeth and Southwark
- London Assembly Elections 1st May 2008
- \* Green Party Drugs spokesperson
- \* Convenor Lambeth Green Party http://lambeth.greenparty.org.uk/

#### The Urban Green Fair

Sunday 31st August 2008 Brockwell Park, Brixton. 'cooling climate change preparing for a post peak oil planet' www.urbangreenfair.org.uk

Peak Oil Primers

http://www.energybulletin.net/primer.php http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peak oil

Tradeable Carbon Quota's http://www.teqs.net/

## **Transition Town Brixton** presents:

The ABUNDANCE PROJECT is setting out to create a Brixton Green Map (identifying cultivable space and potential 'growing communities' in Brixton), and a demonstration Urban Agriculture project on the allotments on the Guinness Trust Estate off Loughborough Park Road, SW2. It will culminate in bringing the identified potential growing communities together at the demonstration site in a Sunday work-day event in midsummer and a final conference/inspiration/ resourcing day in October/November 2008 to help them launch their own UA projects. A paid position has become available through funding to fulfil the role of assistant. Working in conjunction with Robert Biel (UCL) and Duncan Law (Transition Town Brixton) the employment is for 20 days of 8 hours and will be based on flexitime. Anyone interested in TTB and general events organised by them then they should contact Duncan Law

Http://www.transitiontownbrixton.org T 07958 635181 e info@transitiontownbrixton.org

### Greener Ventures Ltd. & Food for Health SE15

Managed and run on a tight budget this successful project originated from the former Brockwell Park community greenhouses. Based at the Peckham Settlement Center It covers a number of boroughs including Southwark and Lambeth and promises to deliver fresh veg and fruit to your door via the most sustainable means possible - a pedal bike and trailer. With the success of organic bag/box schemes in general Peter has tried to provide something different. Rather than compete on the level of Abel & Cole or Farmaround he tries to source his products from as local as possible. Last year South London Permaculture provided apples from their gardens from customers who ignore this top fruit in favor of something packaged and clean from the supermarket. It is an incredible mentality but also an opportunity for the likes of grassroots projects to exploit. Peter would admit that the system needs tweaking. Currently he can provide eggs, bread, a good variety of vegetables, fruit and nuts. Willing cyclists can earn their fill whilst joining in this fun network. Contact Peter on 020 7252 8300

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# How to apply the principles of permaculture in

# daily life by Ruth Robinson

FEATURE

Firstly, I should explain why I want to try and do this. I have begun an Applied Permaculture Design Course in order to get more design experience and to deepen my knowledge of this fascinating and life changing area. One of the designs can be made up of changes applied to everyday life

Sounds like a good place to start.

So what is the 'everyday life' that I am applying the principles to? Well, I live in an upstairs Housing Association flat with my 8-year-old daughter in a fairly densely populated urban area, close to parks, an allotment, school and local shops. The landlord insulated the loft but we do have an old 1800's converted flat so the rooms are big and wind whistles through the windows on dark winter nights. I haven't carpeted the place yet or draught-proofed, DIY not being my favourite pastime.

We don't have access to a garden and I travel by bike or train. I don't fly any more (and don't plan to) and we try to recycle as much as possible. I am trying to grow food on my allotment on a hill but it is difficult due to the heavy London clay soil, which is also a bit eroded.

So what are the principles of permaculture? These vary but overlap, according to the emphasis of the teacher or practitioner. I will refer to Bill Mollison's original context, as they are succinct:

- Work with nature rather than against.
- The problem is the solution.
- Make the least change for the greatest possible effect.
- The yield of a system is theoretically unlimited (or only limited by the imagination and information of the designer).
- Everything gardens (or modifies its environment).

# (From Permaculture, a Designers' Manual, by Bill Mollison)

1. Work with nature. This is the whole point of permaculture. Many of us have lost touch with what 'nature' is and fill our time with distractions (TV, newspapers, computer games) instead of relaxing in nature, observing it both out there in the world and also within. Permaculture talks about patterns in nature: spirals, apple core shapes, figures of 8, human languages, waves, rhythms, archetypes... the list is very long. If we work with these patterns rather than against we would use up less energy and get more favourable results. I would be able to apply this in my own life to parenting for example. My child is a funloving easy-going person who is not ambitious it seems and so I would be using up a lot of energy trying to convince her to do activities she's not into, such as karate (even though I firmly believe it would give her more confidence when older perhaps). I could also pay more attention to synchronicity, meeting certain people at certain times often when I have been thinking about them is often a mystery and a thrill. I don't intend to look for meanings in everything that happens but I won't discount serendipity as an indication that I'm on the right track. On a gardening level working with the nature of the soil on One Tree Hill will be a challenge. As mentioned it is made of heavy clay and is nutrient poor. This I am working on but it will take time. So for now I plan to just grow things that survive there and use them as green manure (if they are not edible that is!)

2. The problem is the solution.

Masanoba Fukuoka says that if there is a 'problem' it is a symptom of something being out of balance, so problems are really nature's feedback system in action. I like the way this can be applied to almost anything. As a parent I sometimes get grumpy through tiredness and relentless responsibility. My solution would be to prioritise social life and fun on a regular

basis, this is not rocket science! Often problems are things that actually need more attention, just like naughty kids! I've already mentioned we don't have a garden, however, this does mean that we go out to parks more often and are able to bump into friends and interact with the real world. Meanwhile, back at the allotment and the soil again. it is hard and dry in summer and very inhospitable. The stuff that I can grow there, broad beans, grass, clover for instance, can be used as mulch or can be dug in to improve its quality. I can attend to it also by adding compost on a regular basis.

- 3. Least changes for greatest possible effect. Small changes meet with less resistance than huge overhauls. I can't afford to retrofit my flat and moving is big upheaval that I am not ready for yet, so I can start by draught proofing by using old materials that I have at home, pillows, unused itchy blankets for example. If I want to cut down on food miles and packaging I could grow salad on my windowsill, it would also cost me a lot less.
- 4. The yield of a system is theoretically unlimited. This may be a difficult one to grasp in our current consumption-based society as we are encouraged to act upon our cravings for the latest style, model, or invention and consume even when we don't really need it. Having the latest thing has become associated with social status and acceptability. However if we did more sharing and swapping (i.e.,

- LETS) we would potentially have access to limitless skills and items whenever we needed them. In my allotment there is a finite space of course, but viewed over time, there is no reason why, If I manage it well, it cannot continue to produce food indefinitely. The same applies to ideas, there is a theoretically limitless store of ideas generated by people, especially when they get together and share. So this principle works best when resources are pooled and co-operation is in action. This brings us to the final principle.
- Everything gardens. To me, this 5. is about interconnectedness. Everything we do has an effect on our world, on others. So if we take a positive action it will create positive results. If its negative we could actually spend quite a while unpicking the damage done. Personally I wish to reduce the impact I have on the environment as much as I can and am working towards becoming a vegan. (I just need to adapt to life without fried eggs and pizza first!) My welfare overlaps with the welfare of others. I know the problem is that in our global times, I can't always see the damage I might be inflicting on others by my lifestyle choices, which makes it easier for me to continue shopping at Primark and Tesco's, buying heavily packaged goods etc...

So what would be my small-scale action plan to apply permaculture principles to daily life?

 Work with nature – listen to my body, try not to fill my time being

- busy and distracted. Use meditation and breathing as a grounding space-making tool.
- The problem is the solution

   See problems as feedback.
   My child's 'misbehaviour' is a warning sign. Do I need to do something differently?
   Pay more attention or let something go?
- Deast change for greatest possible effect use my energy wisely and economically based on what I can comfortably do. Weigh up options before taking action (Observation). Start small grow salads and sprouts on the windowsill, and draught proof the doors.
- Yield is limitless use resources already in existence. Borrow a neighbour's ladder, offer my time in exchange for use of their tools, bake a cake (people rarely have time to cook). Use LETS for outstanding DIY jobs at home.
- Cut down on consumption.
   Become a vegan. Holiday in the UK or even London!

IF you have any (polite) suggestions please email: rufina36@hotmail.com

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News from the mews



**By Niki Hart** 

# Introducing Giants & Saplings

# A Purple Broccoli Theatre collaboration with South London Permaculture Group

Purple Broccoli Theatre have been growing new green shoots in South East London thanks to funding from The Heritage Lottery Fund. Already developing a reputation for exciting environmental theatre

for children, the Broccolites have been reaching their branches out further into the local community by

running a year long residency in 4 local schools based on the theme of trees. Ever noticed how many incredible examples of them we have all around us in this part of London? The idea of the Giants & Saplings residency was to get children to do just that, take notice of the trees and to learn all about them and about the amazing history of Norwood once the Great North Wood. Children from Paxton, Hitherfield, St Lukes and Kingswood Primary schools took part. They visited Norwood Park, Dulwich Woods and One Tree Hill, listened to tree stories participated in drama workshops and created their own stories based on the natural and local history they had learned about. They then created performances of these stories which they performed at The Nettlefold Children's Theatre in West Norwood.

the children for a planting session.

Further workshops concluded in November with tree planting sessions in Norwood Park, a unique Merlyn Peter prepares the saplings and feature of which is the Hedgerow which marks its entire boundary. The children planted mixed hedgerow trees, helping to increase biodiversity

and to close up gaps in the hedgerow. This was for many of those involved in the project the high point of the year with beautiful sunny days blessing the proceedings and with Merlyn Peter of South London Permaculture Group leading the day's activities along with Clarence Riley from Lambeth Parks. The children not only discovered the joy of trees and of planting but also what great fun can be had in the park.



Purple Broccoli Theatre performance of Giants & Saplings

www.purplebroccolitheatre.org Purple Broccol Purple Broccoli

www.purplebroccolitheatre.org

www.purplebroccolitheatre.org Purple Broccol

Purple Broccoli would like to thank South London Permaculture group for their involvement in this project, The Heritage Lottery Fund, The Friends of Norwood Park, Lambeth Parks, West Norwood Library and The Nettlefold Theatre, the participating schools and of course all the children for helping to make Giants & Saplings such a great success.

For further information about the work of Purple Broccoli



# Urban Green Fair

31<sup>st</sup> August 2008 Brockwell Park Brixton

# **COMPETITIONS**

With special guests

BEST GROWING BOX up to 1m<sup>2</sup>
Judges will be awarding for several categories.

These include:

most variety of veg,

biggest crop of tomatoes,
and the loveliest looking edible box.

1ST ANNUAL BREAD BAKING COMPETITION. Bring in your exotic loaves. Meet the panel.

VOLUNTEERS, COMPETITION ENTRANTS, WORKSHOPS AND PRESENTATIONS please contact SLP on eight.merlyn@virgin.net 0845 458 1734 Merlyn Peter

# Re-LEAF

### MISSION STATEMENT:

To further the benefits of children by introducing them to traditional practices. In creating an arena in which they can learn they are expected to integrate with their environment on a greater sensual level from that normally experienced in modern lifestyles. Here they are encouraged to develop mind/body relationships in preparation for adulthood and in so doing prepare them for a long-term future via the application of permaculture principles and ethics.

Re-LEAF is a mobile yurt project. It is an acronym for:

LEARNING, ENTERTAINMENT, ART & FOOD

All workshops shall be delivered under these headings or a combination of them. It is not always the intent to reside or work from a yurt, since the vision necessitates the development of a much larger program. But the use of traditional techniques as far as possible is desirable.

PHILOSOPHY: The name Re-LEAF signifies a play on the pun, for relief in its normal sounding sense can apply to excessive heat or excessive cold, as well as protection from wind, rain and all other severe weather conditions. Using the word 'leaf' also indicates the environmental, and in particular, ecological tendencies of this project. For instance, the leaf is the energy-manufacturing organ of the plant or tree and thus forms the essential edge between sunlight and earth. As an interface for energy conversion and outward growth, the child is seen here to simulate this process, maturing as it does and contributing to the health of the greater whole. This communal responsibility is what will form the ethical basis of the foundation school project and thus generating a spiritual awareness of one's own kind. Re-LEAF then is asking the reader to reference energy in transformation.

For schools and projects that would like to work with South London Permaculture please contact Ruth or Merlyn on:

# How many actors does it take to change the world? Purple Broccoli Theatre find out.

Nature. What would we do without it? Ancients understood its power to feed or destroy and paid it due respect. Their lives where inextricably linked with it in very direct ways. But for all our technological advances our survival on this lovely planet earth still depends on the quality of our relationship with the natural forces that shape our lives and provide for us. Increasingly in our society we are taught to avoid direct contact with nature, to engage instead with computers and televisions, but nothing can feed all our senses in the way nature can. Time in nature is essential to a healthy life giving us opportunities have fun, exercise, reflect, heal and be inspired. It has the power to dissolve stress and to lift our spirits, how many of us could do with more of that? So Purple Broccoli Theatre are developing projects with the aim to create more opportunities for young people to get out into the parks and green spaces and to get more switched onto nature. The projects involve workshops, storytelling, theatre performances and planting activities. If you would like to know more please visit our website or email: purplebroccolitheatre@yahoo.co.uk.



Children from Paxton Primary School enjoying Norwood Park on the planting day.

# 2008 Courses & further contacts

### Full Residential PC Design Course

Sept 8th - 20th Cost: Sliding scale £250 – 5 5 0 Contact: Charly or Merlyn **Coed Hills Rural Artspace** http://www.coedhills.com t 01446 774084 e info@coedhills.com e eight.merlyn@virgin.net

### Ongoing Permaculture Gardening

Cost: Free Contact: Sarah Bear Spike Surplus Community http://www.spikesurplus.org/ index.html t 020 7252 9733

#### Urban Green Fair

31st August Cost: Donation Contact: Shane Collins **Brockwell Park, Brixton** Http:// www.urbangreenfair.org.uk t 0208 671 5936 e shane@gn.apc.org

#### Green Man Fayre

August 25th Cost: Members only Contact: Merlyn Peter SLP http://

www.soteriologicgarden.net t 0845 458 1734

e eight.merlyn@virgin.net

Apple Day

October 11th Cost: Donation Contact: Merlyn Peter http://

www.soteriologicgarden.net t 0845 458 1734 e eight.merlyn@virgin.net

#### Wilderness skills

Cost: see website Contact: Hannah

Natural Pathways

http://wwwnaturalpathways.co.uk

# Tree Grafting Work-

August 17<sup>th</sup> ,11am – 4 pm Cost: Donation

### Blackberry Jam Making Day

August 31<sup>st</sup> 11am - 4pm Contact: Gareth Forest Farm Peace Garden t 0791 308 9979

e ffpg2004@yahoo.co.uk

## Introduction to Permaculture

July 26th - 27th

#### Fruit Tree Grafting August 9th

Apple Day

September 28th **Brighton Permaculture Trust** 

www.brightonpermaculture.c o.uk

# Edible Landscaping

Sept 27th - Dec 6th Cost: £65 (Concessions)

## A Series One Day Summer Workshops

Pick & Cook **Powerful Predators** Growing veg from scratch The Secrets of the Soil Indelible Designs Cost: £30 Contact: Michele Fitzsimmons http://

#### SLP: WHO ARE WE?

South London Permaculture was formed in 2003 as a voluntary organization. We run as a not-forprofit business enterprise. Although we apply a minimalist attitude to development we have engaged in a number of projects for both adults and children. These include a children's mobile yurt classroom entitled Re-LEAF (learning, entertainment, art, and food), a woodland allotment community project, guerilla gardening, full & introductory permaculture design courses, horticultural courses, teacher training, facilitation, consultancy, and a membership scheme. To register your interest and support us please become a member. Our business address is:

**South London Permaculture** PO Box 24991, Forest Hill, London SE23 0845 458 1734

Merlyn Peter (Hon) Chair Ruth Robinson (Hon) Secretary

"Our constitution is rooted in the indigenous understanding of sustainability."

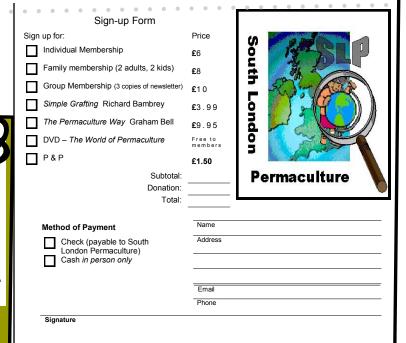
To place an advert or an article please call Merlyn 0845 458 1 734 eight.merlyn@virgin.net

# Free offer This is a limited offer only.

Membership applications before the 31st August will receive a free DVD entitled 'The World of Permaculture'. The short documentary highlights 3 projects: Ragman's Lane Farm, Naturewise and Soteriologic Garden. Available to members only.

Special Offer only £9.95

Graham Bell's 'The Permaculture Way' £5 off normal retail price



#### **South London Permaculture**

PO Box 24991 Forest Hill London **SE23 3YT** 

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